

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, PGOV, PINT, PK, FR
SUBJECT: GAULLIST MOUTHPIECE CRITICIZES GISCARD ON THE
PAKISTANI DEAL

REF: PARIS 28319

1. THE RPR (GAULLIST) NEWSLETTER LA LETTRE DE LA NATION
DEVOTED SPACE IN ITS FIRST TWO POST-VACATION ISSUES AU-
GUST 28 AND 29 TO CRITICIZING GISCARD'S DECISION TO CAN-
CEL THE SALE OF THE REPROCESSING PLANT TO PAKISTAN. LA
LETTRE JUSTIFIED ITS CRITICISM ON THE FOLLOWING BASIS:
(A) GIVEN THAT THE PLANS FOR THE PLANT WERE ALREADY IN
PAKISTANI HANDS, THE GOF CANCELLING OF THE SALE COULD
ONLY DELAY, NOT STOP, ITS CONSTRUCTION. LA LETTRE NOTED
THAT THE CHINESE WOULD BE ONLY TOO GLAD TO PROVIDE ASSIS-
TANCE IN ORDER TO OBTAIN ACCESS TO THE FRENCH PLANS.
THUS THE CANCELLATION WOULD PERHAPS HURT RATHER THAN
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HELP THE CAUSE OF NON-PROLIFERATION. (B) THE GOF'S
RENEGING ON THE DEAL AFTER THE AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED CAL-
LED INTO QUESTION ITS INTEGRITY IN OTHER MAJOR CON-
TRACTS, COST IT SALES AND RISKED PAKISTAN RETALIATION
AGAINST FRENCH EXPORTS. (C) WHY SHOULD THE GOF FOLLOW A
POLICY DIFFERENT FROM THE GERMANS WHO WERE CONTINUING
WITH THEIR DEAL WITH THE BRAZILIANS?

2. NOTING THERE HAD BEEN SUBSTANTIAL USG PRESSURE ON THE GOF TO CANCEL THE CONTRACT, LA LETTRE POINTED OUT THAT THE NEW YORK TIMES HAD YIELDED TO THE TEMPTATION TO INTERPRET THE DECISION AS A GISCARD BOW TO CARTER, AN INTERPRETATION ALSO MADE BY THE PAKISTANI NEWSPAPER, NAWAI QAGAT. LA LETTRE PLAYED DOWN THE AMERICAN CONNECTION, HOWEVER, PREFERRING TO ATTACK GISCARD ON WHAT IT REFERRED TO AS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF HIS "POLITICS OF APPEARANCES" -- HIGHLY PUBLICIZED ACTS WHOSE GENUINE IMPORT IS ROUGHLY ZERO.

3. COMMENT: GAULLIST CRITICISM OF GISCARD'S DECISION WAS PREDICTABLE. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS SOMEWHAT COMFORTING THAT, IN SPITE OF WHAT MUST HAVE BEEN A GREAT TEMPTATION, THE GAULLISTS DID NOT ATTACK GISCARD FOR BOWING TO CARTER. NO DOUBT WE HAVE NOT HEARD THE LAST ON THIS, BUT SO FAR GISCARD IS ESCAPING INTENSE DOMESTIC CRITICISM.

HARTMAN

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